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**TACHYSTOLA ACROXANTHA (MEYRICK) (LEP:OECOPHORIDAE)  
AROUND MANCHESTER: HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS.**

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**Introduction**

THE OECOPHORID MOTH *Tachystola acroxantha* was first recorded in England, from South Devon around 1920, having arrived from its native home in Australia, probably via a consignment of imported plants. It remained, restricted to South Devon until the 1980s, when it started to spread into the neighbouring counties of Somerset (1981) and Cornwall (1985).

**Records from around Manchester**

It was around this time that I started to take an interest in the microlepidoptera. The first *T. acroxantha* that I identified at my previous house in Hazel Grove, Stockport, was on 20 July 1988, although I had seen it during previous years without knowing its identity. I caught the odd specimen at the same site during the next two years and found another, two miles away on 24 May 1989. I lived in Hazel Grove until 1993 and ran a light trap intermittently throughout this period without catching any further specimens.

During 1990, B. T. Shaw, knowing of my interest in the microlepidoptera, showed me an example of a moth which he was taking in numbers from his garden in Heald Green, Stockport, some eight miles to the west of me. This was also *T. acroxantha*. It has been abundant at this site every year since, flying almost continuously from late April until mid December. Although moths are not regularly counted at this site, 44 were caught on 15 May 1999.

Whilst looking through a collection of photographs of micro-moths, which P. B. Hardy had sent to me to identify, I also came across examples of *T. acroxantha*. These he had taken in his garden in Sale, some eight miles to the north west of Heald Green. Two from 1986 and one from 1987, all pre-dated my first Hazel Grove specimens. The earliest date being 5 July 1986. A further two moths were also obtained from Sale during 1995.

All of the above mentioned sites are in Cheshire and lie along the southern edge of the Manchester conurbation.

Towards the end of 1996, I was shown another example of *T. acroxantha*, taken on 17 October 1996 from Flixton, South Lancashire, a further five miles west-north-west of Sale, by K. McCabe. Apparently the species had been present at this site since at least 1994. During the 1998 and 1999 seasons, 284 and 297 individuals were caught; with a maximum catch of 45 on 13 May 1998. The flight period extended from late April until late November. In both years it was one of the fourth most abundant species of micro-moth entering the m.v. trap.

On 31 July 1999, I attended a light being operated at a garden in Marple, Stockport, which attracted a single *T. acroxantha*. This extended the species range by a couple of miles to the north east and, three days later, one finally entered my

own garden trap, at Higher Poynton, which also extends the range by a couple of miles, this time to the south-east. In addition to these, A. Heginbottom, a colleague from work, showed me a specimen, taken at his house light, in Cheadle Hulme, Stockport on 21 September 1999.

### Discussion

It would appear from the above sightings that *T. acroxantha* is not only well established throughout the south of the Manchester conurbation and has indeed been so for at least the past decade, but is also an extremely successful colonist, having become one of the most abundant species at suitable sites.

Its status in the north of Manchester is less clear, as I am unaware of anyone trapping in this area. However, on a visit to Bolton Museum during November 1999, I was shown a single specimen by M. G. Prescott, which he had taken in his garden at Bury earlier in the year. Bury lies about 20 miles north of the species nearest known sites in the south of Manchester and I would not be surprised to discover that it was just as common in the areas in between. Although it appears to be extending its range in the area, it has not yet been taken from sites beyond the Manchester conurbation, such as those on the Cheshire Plain.

### Acknowledgements

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### References

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### More on unusual micro-moths in Somerset

For nearly ten years the Bristol & District Moth Group has been actively recording in the field and also collating historic records for the region around Bristol and Bath. This area includes parts of Vice-counties 6 (North Somerset) and 34 (West Gloucestershire) and agrees with the region covered by the Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre.

Further to Slade & Farrar (*Ent. Rec.* **111**: 232) the Group has records of *Tachystola acroxantha* (Meyr.) from Weston-super-Mare dating back to 1983 when it was recorded by Martin Evans. Since that time the species has been regularly reported by the same recorder and also by Dixie Dean. Consequently, the 1999